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EXAMINER

HALE, ADAM G

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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4175

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/673,142

Applicant(s)

CREEDLE ET AL.

Examiner

Adam G. Hale

Art Unit

4175

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 September 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892).
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date See Continuation Sheet.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

Continuation of Attachment(s) 3). Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08), Paper No(s)/Mail Date :12/30/2003, 4/9/2004, 11/18/2004 and 12/14/2006.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1 – 4, 6 – 27, 29 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) based upon a public use or sale of the invention. Applicant's disclosure of their invention to two contractors and a subcontractor constituted a public use. The proper test for the public use prong of 102(b) statutory bar is whether the purported use (1) was accessible to the public; or (2) was commercially exploited. The display by applicants to prospective customers of a presentation outlining their claimed invention is indicative of commercial exploitation. See MPEP 2133.03, *Cataphote Corp. v. DeSoto Chemical Coatings, Inc.*, 356 F.2d 24, 27, 148 USPQ 527, 529 (9th Cir. 1966).

3. Applicant has noted in their Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, filed 9/12/2003, that a presentation of ideas underlying the invention was made to two contractors and one subcontractor for the purpose of gathering feedback and to determine whether such a product would be considered a useful tool in the industry, Page 3 – 4. By presenting the invention to members of the market for the invention, and inquiring as to whether the product would be useful in the industry, applicants were engaging in market testing by attempting to gauge consumer demand for their claimed invention. "The experimental use exception...does not include market testing where

Art Unit: 4175

the inventor is attempting to gauge consumer demand for his claimed invention. The purpose of such activities is commercial exploitation and not experimentation." See MPEP 2133.03, In re Smith, 714 F.2d 1127, 1134, 218 USPQ 976, 983 (Fed. Cir. 1983).

4. It is noted that Applicant' has provided the presentation in conjunction with an IDS. Applicant has stated that the disclosure to the two software companies did not constitute a public use or sale for the purposes of 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Applicant has not provided any evidence supporting his assertions. Additionally, page 3 of the GCPay slides indicates that "Guests" were present at the presentation.

5. **With respect to claim 1**, see page 52.
6. **With respect to claim 2**, see page 52.
7. **With respect to claim 3**, see page 52.
8. **With respect to claim 4**, see page 40.
9. **With respect to claim 6**, see page 42.
10. **With respect to claim 7**, see page 42.
11. **With respect to claim 8**, see pages 41, 42 and 45.
12. **With respect to claim 9**, see page 52.
13. **With respect to claim 10**, see page 52.
14. **With respect to claim 11**, see page 33.
15. **With respect to claim 12**, see pages 44 and 52.
16. **With respect to claim 13**, see page 52.
17. **With respect to claim 14**, see page 56.
18. **With respect to claim 15**, see pages 20 and 23.

Art Unit: 4175

19. **With respect to claim 16, see page 21.**
20. **With respect to claim 17, see page 20.**
21. **With respect to claim 18, see page 32.**
22. **With respect to claim 19, see page 52.**
23. **With respect to claim 20, see page 52.**
24. **With respect to claim 21, see page 53.**
25. **With respect to claim 22, see page 61.**
26. **With respect to claim 23, see page 61.**
27. **With respect to claim 24, see page 52.**
28. **With respect to claim 25, see page 40.**
29. **With respect to claim 26, see page 52.**
30. **With respect to claim 27, see page 42.**
31. **With respect to claim 29, see page 59.**
32. **With respect to claim 30, see page 59.**

Art Unit: 4175

33. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 – 9, 25, 26 and 28 – 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by “Primavera launches PrimeContract for the Construction Industry; PrimeContract Streamlines E-Commerce, Collaboration and Project Control via the Internet”, Business Wire, Nov. 29, 2000, Pg. 1 (hereinafter referred to as “Primavera”).

34. **With respect to claim 1**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of a contract using a server accessible by a plurality of performing parties through a data network, (Para. 8) the method comprising: receiving performance data at the server from at least one of the performing parties through the data network, the performance data indicating an amount of work performed under the contract by the at least one performing party (PrimeContract subscribers use a web browser to prepare, submit and negotiate progress payments, Para. 8); and determining a payment amount based on the performance data (subcontractors apply performance data against the defined schedule of values, Para. 8).

35. **With respect to claim 2 and 9**, Primavera teaches the method for administering performance of the contract, in which the network comprises a public Internet (subscribers use a web a browser, Para. 8).

36. **With respect to claim 4**, Primavera teaches the method for administering performance of the contract, further comprising initially storing a schedule of values associated with performance of the contract, wherein determining the payment amount is further based on comparing the performance data with the schedule of values (subcontractors apply performance data against the defined schedule of values, Para. 8).

37. **With respect to claim 6**, Primavera teaches the method for administering performance of the contract according, further comprising: sending the payment amount from the server to another one of the performing parties through the data network (agreement by the parties regarding payment and certification by a third party triggers payment, Para. 8; PrimeContract uses a web browser to negotiate monthly progress payments, Para. 8).

38. **With respect to claim 7**, Primavera teaches the method for administering performance of the contract further comprising:
sending an electronic message to another one of the performing parties indicating that the payment amount has been determined; (PrimeContract notifies buyers and sellers via email, Para. 8) and receiving a request from the messaged party to receive the payment amount through the data network (interpreted to be the agreement between the buyer and seller that, once approved by a third party, triggers payment, Para. 8).

39. **With respect to claim 8**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of a contract comprising:

receiving at a server, through a data network, a plurality of schedules corresponding to a plurality of subcontractors performing work under the contract, each schedule identifying at least one task to be performed by the corresponding subcontractor and a cost associated with each task (contract details and defined schedules of performance values are entered, Para. 9);

receiving at the server, through the data network, an application for payment corresponding to one of the plurality of schedules, the application for payment

Art Unit: 4175

identifying a portion of the at least one task completed by the corresponding subcontractor (interpreted to be inherently disclosed as the reference teaches that subscribers, i.e. more than contractor, use a web browser to prepare, submit and negotiate progress payments, and those submissions for payment are applied against performance data, Para. 8); and

determining at least one of an amount of work completed and an amount of payment to the subcontractor based on comparing the application for payment and the corresponding schedule (subcontractors apply performance data against the defined schedule of values, Para. 8).

40. **With respect to claim 25**, Primavera teaches a computer readable medium storing a computer program for administering performance of a contract (subscribers use a web browser to prepare, submit and negotiate monthly progress payments, thereby inherently disclosing the usage of a computer readable medium (Para. 8), the computer program being executed by a computer accessible through a data network (subscribers use a web browser, Para. 8), the computer readable medium comprising:

a schedule code segment for receiving a plurality of schedules corresponding to a plurality of subcontractors performing work under the contract, each schedule identifying at least one task to be performed by the corresponding subcontractor and a cost associated with each task (contract details are entered one time, including a defined schedule of values for use in calculating progress payments, Para. 8);

a payment application code segment for receiving an application for payment corresponding to one of the plurality of schedules, the application for payment

Art Unit: 4175

identifying a portion of the at least one task completed by the corresponding subcontractor (subscribers use a web browser to prepare, submit and negotiate monthly progress payments, Para. 8); and

a determining code segment for determining at least one of an amount of work completed and an amount of payment to the subcontractor based on comparing the application for payment and the corresponding schedule (subcontractors simply apply performance data against the defined schedule of values, Para. 8).

41. **With respect to claim 26**, Primavera teaches a computer readable medium, in which the data network comprises an Internet (interpreted to be the disclosure of subscribers using a web browser, Para. 8, and the disclosure the PrimeContract is a web application, Para. 1).

42. **With respect to claim 28**, Primavera teaches a system for enabling a contract payment process (PrimeContract subscribers use a web browser to prepare, submit and negotiate monthly progress payments, Para. 8), comprising:

a database for storing data relating to each of a plurality of users, the data comprising an account number corresponding to each user (interpreted to be the contract details, Para. 9); and

a computer for receiving via a communications network a payment request from at least one user of the plurality of users, the request for payment being based on performance of at least a portion of the contract by the user (PrimeContract subscribers use a web browser to prepare, submit and negotiate monthly progress payments, Para. 8);

wherein an electronic payment directed to the account number corresponding to the user is initiated in response to the payment request when the payment request is approved (after the buyer and seller agree on the proper payment for progress that period, payment is triggered after certification by a third party, Para. 8).

43. **With respect to claim 29**, Primavera teaches a system, wherein the server is configured for tracking a status of completion of work under the contract based, at least in part, on the performance of at least a portion of the contract by the user (interpreted to be the disclosure that PrimeContract notifies buyers and sellers via email that the other party has responded to the latest declaration of progress, thereby tracking the status of completion of work under the contract, Para. 8).

44. **With respect to claim 30**, Primavera teaches a system, wherein the server is configured for sending or receiving information to the at least one user via e-mail, the information relating to at least one of a draw, an inspection and an approval (PrimeContract notifies buyers and sellers via email that the other party has responded to the latest declaration of progress, Para. 8).

45. Claims 5, 10 and 27 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Primavera as evidenced by Primavera PrimeContract Brochure.

46. **With respect to claim 5**, the Primavera reference does not specifically teach the use of markups. But the PrimeContract software and method is also disclosed in the Primavera PrimeContract Brochure (hereinafter referred to as "Brochure"). As evidenced by Brochure, PrimeContract teaches the method for administering performance of the contract (Brochure, See A) further comprising: calculating a contract

Art Unit: 4175

markup amount based on the performance data; and determining the payment further based on the contract markup amount (Brochure, mark-ups can be added during consolidation, See (i)).

47. **With respect to claims 10 and 27**, the Primavera reference does not specifically teach the limitations of claims 10 and 27. However, as evidenced by Brochure, PrimeContract teaches the method and inherently computer readable media for administering performance of the contract (See A), further comprising:

receiving at the server, through the data network, a change order request associated with the at least one task for modifying the corresponding schedule in accordance with the change order request, (See (ii) and (iii)); and

receiving at the server, through the data network, a change order approval approving the change order request (See (ii) and (iii));

wherein determining at least one of the amount of work completed and the amount of payment to the subcontractor is further based on the approved change order (interpreted to be inherently disclosed as Brochure teaches that change orders occur during payment negotiations, See (ii)).

48.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

49. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

50. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

51. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Art Unit: 4175

52. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Primavera in view of SK Drywall v. Developers Financial, as summarized in the Arizona Business Gazette, 11/8/1991, (hereinafter referred to as "SK Drywall").

53. **With respect to claim 3**, Primavera does not specifically teach where the performance data further comprises an amount of materials stored. Although Primavera does not provide an exhaustive or exclusive definition of performance data, SK Drywall teaches that the performance data from which progress payments are based includes completed labor, materials, and equipment costs (See (i)). SK Drywall thereby teaches that performance data includes the amount of materials stored on a construction site. It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the amount of materials stored in the definition of performance data in order to provide a more useful and efficient method of administering a contract over a data network as performance data is understood in the industry to include the amount of materials stored, as evidenced by SK Drywall.

54. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Primavera in view of "Retainage, what is it?", New York State Office of the State Comptroller Accounting Bulleting A-191 R1, hereinafter referred to as Ref. A.

55. **With respect to claim 11**, Brochure does not specifically teach the method for administering performance of the contract in which determining the amount of payment to the subcontractor is further based on subtracting a retainage amount, the retainage amount being a predetermined percentage applied to the application for payment. Brochure teaches the ability to make adjustments to the progress payments (interpreted

to be inherently disclosed as Brochure teaches the ability to add mark-ups to progress payments, see (i)). Ref. A teaches that retainage is the amount that is temporarily withheld from contract payments to ensure that a contractor will perform as agreed (see (a)). It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the concept of retainage to the method of Brochure in order to provide a more complete and efficient progress management tool as described in Brochure.

56. Claims 12 – 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Primavera, as evidenced by Brochure.

57. **With respect to claim 12**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of a project using a web server accessible through a packet switched data network (subscribers use a web browser to prepare, submit and negotiate monthly progress payments, Para. 8), the method comprising:

receiving at least one subcontract schedule of values via the packet switched data network, the subcontract schedule of values comprising a plurality of subcontract line items (subcontractors apply performance data against a defined schedule of values, Para. 8);

receiving at least one subcontract application for payment via the packet switched data network, the subcontract application for payment including the subcontract line items (subscribers ... submit and negotiate monthly progress payments, Para. 8);

creating a general contract schedule of values relating to the project, the general

Art Unit: 4175

contract schedule of values comprising a plurality of general contract line items

(subcontractors apply performance data against a defined schedule of values, Para. 8);

Primavera does not specifically teach:

receiving associations between the subcontract line items of each subcontract schedule of values and the general contract line items of the general contract schedule of values;

updating the general contract line items based on information in the associated subcontract line items received in the subcontract application for payment; and creating a general contract application for payment based on the updated contract line items; wherein the general contract application for payment automatically determines a total performed work amount and a payment amount due based on the total completed work amount.

Even though Primavera does not specifically teach receiving associations between the subcontract line items and schedule of values and updating the general contract line items based on the payment application and determining total work performed based on the applications, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the same methods of Primavera to progress payments between a general contractor and an owner or other similar entity in order to more efficiently track the progress of construction and effectuate prompt and accurate payments thereof.

58. **With respect to claim 13**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of the project, further comprising submitting the general contract

Art Unit: 4175

application for payment via the packet switched data network (subscribers use a web browser to prepare, submit and negotiate monthly progress payments, Para. 8).

59. **With respect to claim 14**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of the project, further comprising receiving an approval of the general contract application for payment via the packet switched data network (buyers and sellers are notified via email that the other party have responded to the latest declaration of progress, and they thereafter may agree on the proper payment for the progress that period, Para. 8).

60. **With respect to claim 15**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of the project further comprising initially creating a project profile and assigning roles to participants, including the at least one subcontractor and at least one of an owner and an architect (interpreted to be the disclosure that PrimeContract ... enables facility owners and their engineers and contractors to collaborate over the internet, Para. 16).

61. **With respect to claim 16**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of the project in which assigning roles comprises selecting at least one of the participants from a database accessible by the web server (interpreted to be inherently disclosed as the reference teaches that PrimeContract ... enables facility owners and their engineers and contractors to collaborate over the internet, Para. 16, and those respective roles must be selected from sort of database).

62. **With respect to claim 17**, Primavera teaches the method for administering performance of the project in which assigning roles comprises identifying a proxy to

Art Unit: 4175

represent the at least one of the participants, wherein the subcontract schedule of values and the subcontract application for payment are received from the proxy (interpreted inherently disclosed as PrimeContract ... enables facility owners and their engineers and contractors to collaborate over the internet, Para. 16, and the recognized definition of 'proxy' is a person authorized to act for another, as evidenced by the definition of proxy in Credo Reference. Therefore, a facility owner, their engineers or contractors could identify a proxy to represent them).

63. **With respect to claim 18**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of the project in which the subcontract schedule of values is based on a predetermined template accessible through the packet switched data network (interpreted to be the disclosure that contract details are entered one time using familiar forms – i.e. templates, Para. 8).

64. **With respect to claim 19**, Primavera does not specifically teach the change order process in which creating the general contract application for payment is further based on a change order corresponding to at least one of the general contract schedule of values and the at least one subcontract schedule of values. However, PrimeContract does have change order capabilities, as evidenced by Brochure, which describes the change order process of PrimeContract, see (ii) and (iii)).

65. **With respect to claim 20**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of the project according to claim 12, in which creating the general contract application for payment includes entering at least one of a work completed amount and a material presently stored amount (Primavera provides that subcontractors simply

Art Unit: 4175

apply performance data, i.e, work completed or material presently stored amount, against a defined schedule of values, Para. 8. It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the same methods of Primavera to progress payments between a general contractor and an owner or other similar entity in order to more efficiently track the progress of construction and effectuate prompt and accurate payments thereof.

66. **With respect to claim 21**, Primavera does not specifically teach a method for administering performance of the project, in which entering at least one of the work completed amount and the material presently stored amount is performed automatically based on the subcontract application for payment. It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate changes based on subcontractor application for payments into the general contract automatically in order to provide a more efficient method of administering the contract between the general contractor and the owner.

67. **With respect to claim 22**, Primavera does not specifically teach a method for administering performance of the project, in which entering at least one of the work completed amount and the material presently stored amount comprises receiving a dictated amount, different than the at least one of the work completed amount and the material presently stored amount, via the packet switched data network. However, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate changes in a dictated fashion, allowing modifications, rather in an automatic fashion, in order to allow changes to be made in

Art Unit: 4175

payment negotiations, as Primavera teaches that monthly progress payments may be negotiated, and therefore subject to some sort of manual adjustment, Para. 8, it is also well known in the art to provide a method or means to change data that was incorrectly entered.

68. **With respect to claim 23**, Primavera does not specifically teach the method for administering performance of the project, further comprising modifying the received subcontractor application for payment before updating the general contract line items, based on permission to modify the received subcontractor application received via the packet switched data network. However, PrimeContract does provide the feature of modifying the subcontractor application for payment, as evidenced by Brochure, in the change order process of PrimeContract, see Brochure (ii) and (iii). Primavera teaches that a variety of users are present in the system – facility owners, engineers, and contractors, Para. 6. It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the features of a third party being able to certify the application into Primavera in order to make a more efficient and useful product.

69. **With respect to claim 24**, Primavera teaches a method for administering performance of the project, in which the packet switched data network comprises a public Internet (subscribers use a web browser, Para. 8).

Art Unit: 4175


Conclusion

70. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. "PrimeContract Goes Live and World According to Joel Koppelman" provides more information about PrimeContract.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Adam G. Hale whose telephone number is 571-270-3509. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday 7:30 - 6:00 Eastern.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrence Till can be reached on 571-272-1280. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


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Terrence R. Till
Supervisory Patent Examiner